



Bruce Patterson <patterson2006@gmail.com>

Stem cell legislation

6 messages

max Wicha <mwicha@med.umich.edu>
To: patterson2006@gmail.com

Mon, Jan 18, 2010 at 4:11 PM

Dear Bruce,

It was great to talk to you today and to share my thoughts with you regarding the upcoming stem cells proposals in the State Legislature. We have been friends for over 25 years and I greatly respect your judgment and appreciate your dedication to the citizens of Michigan. As a physician and biomedical researcher I can say, without hesitation that the legislation proposed by Senator Tom George would have a chilling effect on biomedical research and make it extremely difficult to achieve the objectives of Proposition 2. As you know, researchers in Michigan were extremely concerned with highly restrictive laws regarding the generation and use of embryonic stem cells. As a result of this, our state was generally regarded as unfriendly to science. With the passage of Proposition 2, we have seen a reversal of this and have been able to recruit and retain talented biomedical researchers. The proposed legislation would make it far more difficult to perform this research. Specifically, it states:

1. That only embryos "not suitable for implantation" be utilized. There are a number of embryos with known genetic defects which neither the mother nor the physician would consider suitable for implantation. However, technically, these embryos could be implanted and the proposed wording makes this ambiguous. As a matter of fact, stem cells derived from embryos carrying genetic diseases may be the most valuable for learning about the nature of these disorders.
2. It is stated that this amendment would make record keeping and paperwork more efficient when, in fact, we have examined this and it would provide onerous new reporting requirements with a large amount of bureaucracy with little gain.
3. Violations are punishable by up to 5 years of jail time and fines of up to \$5000. This would have a chilling effect on researchers entering this field. As you know, sometimes perception is reality and the mere existence of such penalties would discourage research in this area.
4. The George legislation would block most of the work endorsed by the voters under Prop2 by introducing the strict new definition for unsuitable for clinical use.
5. This legislation would not change the fate of a single embryo, it would only force Michigan families to throw about embryos that are unsuitable for clinical use rather than giving them the option to donate them for research, as in the rest of the country. This is because most of the embryos that are considered unsuitable for clinical use would not satisfy Sen. George's

restrictive definition.

6. This legislation could encourage families to seek fertility treatment outside of the state by forcing doctors to share with the state of Michigan detailed information about their fertility treatment choices and the outcomes. I believe it would be unprecedented for a state government to track reproductive health decisions made by its citizens in the manner contemplated in this bill.
7. Stem cell research is already the most heavily regulated form of medical research, particularly in the state of Michigan which is now one of only 3 states that restricts the research in its state constitution. The George bills would not impose meaningful new regulation, only block critical disease research that scientists throughout the rest of the country can legally perform.

While I realize that amendments to legislation can, at times, be used to facilitate its implementation, I feel strongly as an experienced cancer researcher that this legislation would have the opposite effect. The University of Michigan has worked with others to insure that stem cell research be conducted within an ethical, yet effective regulatory framework. This framework could apply to all public and private stem cell research conducted in Michigan. Once again, thank you for discussing this most important issue with me.

Sincerely,

Max Wicha, M.D.
Distinguished Professor of Oncology
Director, University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Center

Electronic Mail is not secure, may not be read every day, and should not be used for urgent or sensitive issues

Bruce Patterson <patterson2006@gmail.com>
Reply-To: patterson2006@gmail.com
To: max Wicha <mwicha@med.umich.edu>

Mon, Jan 18, 2010 at 4:32 PM

Dear Max: your comments & observations are duly noted by me and will be put on the record during our Health Policy committee meeting this week. I would appreciate an indication from you of your willingness to collaborate with me in drafting more appropriate Bills & your availability to complete said task. Thanks.
Bruce

Sent on the Sprint® Now Network from my BlackBerry®

From: "max Wicha" <mwicha@med.umich.edu>
Date: Mon, 18 Jan 2010 16:11:44 -0500
To: <patterson2006@gmail.com>
Subject: Stem cell legislation

[Quoted text hidden]

max Wicha <mwicha@med.umich.edu>
To: patterson2006@gmail.com

Mon, Jan 18, 2010 at 4:35 PM

Bruce- My colleagues (including Sean Morrison who heads our Stem Cell Center) and I would be happy to collaborate in any way that would be helpful to you.
Thanks again for your help.
Max

>>> "Bruce Patterson" <patterson2006@gmail.com> 1/18/2010 4:32 PM >>>
Dear Max: your comments & observations are duly noted by me and will be put on the record during our Health Policy committee meeting this week. I would appreciate an indication from you of your willingness to collaborate with me in drafting more appropriate Bills & your availability to complete said task. Thanks. Bruce
Sent on the Sprint® Now Network from my BlackBerry®

-----Original Message-----

From: "max Wicha" <mwicha@med.umich.edu>
Date: Mon, 18 Jan 2010 16:11:44

[Quoted text hidden]

Bruce Patterson <patterson2006@gmail.com>
Reply-To: patterson2006@gmail.com
To: max Wicha <mwicha@med.umich.edu>

Mon, Jan 18, 2010 at 4:38 PM

So noted. Bruce
Sent on the Sprint® Now Network from my BlackBerry®

-----Original Message-----

From: "max Wicha" <mwicha@med.umich.edu>
Date: Mon, 18 Jan 2010 16:35:42
To: <patterson2006@gmail.com>

[Quoted text hidden]

max Wicha <mwicha@med.umich.edu>
To: patterson2006@gmail.com

Mon, Jan 18, 2010 at 5:34 PM

Bruce- I noted a small "typo" in the email I sent to you. In the sentence describing "Michigan families", I said "Michigan families to throw about embryos" I meant to say "throw out embryos". Just wanted to correct this in case you quote it.
Thanks
max

>>> "Bruce Patterson" <patterson2006@gmail.com> 1/18/2010 4:38 PM >>>

[Quoted text hidden]

Bruce Patterson <patterson2006@gmail.com>
Reply-To: patterson2006@gmail.com
To: max Wicha <mwicha@med.umich.edu>

Mon, Jan 18, 2010 at 5:38 PM

I saw it. Not a problem. Thx

Sent on the Sprint® Now Network from my BlackBerry®

-----Original Message-----

From: "max Wicha" <mwicha@med.umich.edu>

[Quoted text hidden]

"My portfolio is up 100% with an 80% win ratio."

—Gene S., Florida

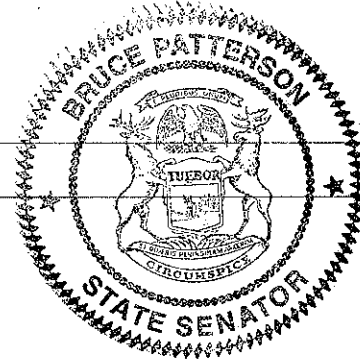
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IBD EDITORIALS



California's Proposition 71 Failure

Posted 01/12/2010 06:36 PM ET

Bioethics: Five years after a budget-busting \$3 billion was allocated to embryonic stem cell research, there have been no cures, no therapies and little progress. So supporters are embracing research they once opposed.

California's Proposition 71 was intended to create a \$3 billion West Coast counterpart to the National Institutes of Health, empowered to go where the NIH could not — either because of federal policy or funding restraints on biomedical research centered on human embryonic stem cells.

Supporters of the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Initiative, passed in 2004, held out hopes of imminent medical miracles that were being held up only by President Bush's policy of not allowing federal funding of embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) beyond existing stem cell lines and which involved the destruction of embryos created for that purpose.

Five years later, ESCR has failed to deliver and backers of Prop 71 are admitting failure. The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, the state agency created to, as some have put it, restore science to its rightful place, is diverting funds from ESCR to research that has produced actual therapies and treatments: adult stem cell research. It not only has treated real people with real results; it also does not come with the moral baggage ESCR does.

To us, this is a classic bait-and-switch, an attempt to snatch success from the jaws of failure and take credit for discoveries and advances achieved by research Prop. 71 supporters once cavalierly dismissed. We have noted how over the years that when funding was needed, the phrase "embryonic stem cells" was used. When actual progress was discussed, the word "embryonic" was dropped because ESCR never got out of the lab.

Prop 71 had a 10-year mandate and by 2008, as miracle cures looked increasingly unlikely, a director was hired for the agency with a track record of bringing discoveries from the lab to the clinic. "If we went 10 years and had no clinical treatments, it would be a failure," says the institute's director, Alan Trounson, a stem cell pioneer from Australia. "We need to demonstrate that we are starting a whole new medical revolution."

The institute is attempting to do that by funding adult stem cell research. Nearly \$230 million was handed out this past October to 14 research teams. Notably, only four of those projects involve embryonic stem cells.

Among the recipients, the Los Angeles Times reports, is a group from UCLA and Children's Hospital in Los Angeles that hopes to cure patients with sickle cell disease by genetically modifying their own blood-forming stem cells to produce healthy red blood cells. Researchers at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center will use their grant to research injecting heart-attack patients with concentrated amounts of their own cardiac stem cells that naturally repair heart tissue.

Dr. Bernadine Healy, director of the National Institutes of Health under Bush 41, wrote in her U.S. News & World Report column recently that "embryonic stem cells, once thought to hold the cure for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and diabetes, are obsolete."

Even worse, they can be dangerous. They are difficult to control, to coax into the specific type of tissue desired. Unlike adult stem cells taken from a patient's own body, ES cells require the heavy use of immunosuppressive drugs. Their use can lead to a form of tumor called a teratoma.

Real promise is held in what are called induced pluripotent stem cells. In 2006, researchers led by Dr. Shinya Yamanaka of Japan's Kyoto University were first able to "reprogram" human skin cells to behave like embryonic stem cells. They can do everything stem cells from destroyed embryos can do.

The National Institutes of Health has said that this type of stem cell offers the prospect of having a renewable source of replacement cells and tissues to treat diseases like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's, spinal cord injury, stroke, burns, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, to name a few.

It is ESCR researchers who have politicized science and stood in the way of real progress. We are pleased to see California researchers

beginning to put science in its rightful place.

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